

June 16, 2009



TRANSCRIPT

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councilmember Phil Andrews, President

Councilmember Roger Berliner

Councilmember Valerie Ervin

Councilmember George Leventhal

Councilmember Nancy Navarro

Councilmember Marc Elrich

Councilmember Nancy Floreen

Councilmember Michael Knapp

Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg

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1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

2 Good morning, everybody, and welcome to a meeting of the County Council. We have a
3 brief session this morning, and we're going to begin with an invocation by Mrs. Jennie
4 Kellogg representing the Baha'is of Montgomery County Northwest in Gaithersburg. We
5 thank Mrs. Kellogg for joining us this morning. Please stand for the invocation.
6

7 JENNIE KELLOGG:

8 Lord, pitiful are we, grant us thy favor. Poor, bestow upon us a share from the ocean of
9 thy wealth. Needy, do thou satisfy us. Abased, give us thy glory. The fowls of the air and
10 the beasts of the field receive their meat each day from thee, and all beings partake of thy
11 care and loving kindness. Deprive not this feeble one of thy wondrous grace, and
12 vouchsafe by thy might unto this helpless soul thy bounty. Give us our daily bread, and
13 grant thine increase in the necessities of life, that we may be dependent on none other but
14 thee, may commune wholly with thee, may walk in thy ways and declare thy mysteries.
15 Thou art the almighty and the loving and the provider of all mankind.
16

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

18 Thank you. We're now going to have a presentation that is a proclamation in recognition
19 of Jobs and Homes Now! National Day of Action by Councilmember Floreen.
20

21 COUNCILMEMBER FLOREEN:

22 Thank you, gentlemen. One of the great things about my job as a member of this Council
23 is I get to go to a variety of community events and learn about activities that are going on
24 throughout the country with significant implications for Montgomery County. And as a
25 result of that, I'm very proud today to be here on behalf of the National Community
26 Reinvestment Coalition. When Dorothy wanted to go home, all she had to do was to click
27 her heels again and repeat, "There's no place like home." If only it were that easy. In
28 reality, it takes a lot of work by a whole lot of people to make home ownership and
29 strengthened communities a reality, and I'm happy to recognize some of the people who
30 are working on this issue today, and I want to especially welcome representatives from
31 the National Community Reinvestment Coalition. We've got Kevin Cowl, who's Executive
32 Vice President of Communications; Josh Silver, Executive Vice President of Research
33 and Policy; I'd like to recognize Henry Williams, who is President of the Montgomery
34 County Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; and Art Williams, who's
35 Vice Chair of the Montgomery County Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Thank
36 you, gentlemen, for being here. These people represent a tremendous coalition of
37 partners in the public sector, private industry, nonprofits, and the faith community working
38 hard to make sure that our financial system treats people from all walks of life fairly and
39 expands home ownership opportunities to all communities. I want to add my support to
40 NCRC's campaign to modernize the Community Reinvestment Act, which has been
41 introduced in Congress, and I'm really happy to join the more than 600 organizations

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1 nationwide who advocated for better opportunities on June 11 for Jobs and Homes Now!
2 National Day of Action. And to celebrate that, we have a proclamation that I'm going to
3 read, which says, "Whereas, on June 11, 2009, the National Community Reinvestment
4 Coalition and its partners held public assemblies throughout the country at courthouses,
5 legislative buildings, and unemployment offices to call for local, state, and federal action to
6 create jobs, stop foreclosures, and rebuild communities; and whereas, the National
7 Community Reinvestment Coalition is an association of more than 600 community-based
8 organizations that promote access to basic banking services, including credit and savings,
9 to create and sustain affordable housing, job development, and vibrant communities for
10 America's working families; and whereas, among middle- and upper-income borrowers in
11 Montgomery County in 2007, Hispanic women were more than twice as likely to get
12 subprime loans and African-American women were 1.8 times more likely to get subprime
13 loans compared to white women; and whereas, according to RealtyTrac, in April 2009 in
14 Montgomery County, there were 176 foreclosure filings in Silver Spring, 111 in
15 Gaithersburg, 88 in Germantown, and 60 in Rockville; and whereas, through information,
16 research, programs, training, and service, the National Community Reinvestment
17 Coalition ensures that people in traditionally underserved communities are treated fairly
18 and justly when applying for credit, opening a bank account, getting a mortgage, a loan, or
19 other financial product or service; now, therefore, be it resolved that the County Council of
20 Montgomery County, Maryland, hereby recognizes Jobs and Homes Now! and calls on
21 government officials, businesses and industry leaders, educators, and all people of
22 Montgomery County to recognize the enormous contributions the National Community
23 Reinvestment Coalition performs and to join the effort to create employment and home
24 ownership opportunities for all." Presented the 16th day of June in the year 2009 and
25 signed by our Council President, Phil Andrews. So thank you, gentlemen, for your hard
26 work. We have a--a required--should we--photo opportunity. ????? It's required by law.
27 And then we'll--

28
29 PHOTOGRAPHER:

30 If anybody would like to say anything first, and then we'll...

31
32 COUNCILMEMBER FLOREEN:

33 OK. We'll do the photo afterwards.

34
35 KEVIN COWL:

36 Sure. I just--

37
38 COUNCILMEMBER FLOREEN:

39 First, folks would like to say some words.

40
41 KEVIN COWL:



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1 I just wanted to thank Councilmember Floreen and Council President Andrews and the
2 entire Montgomery County Council and the County itself for supporting us on this Day of
3 Action. You join 55 other communities across the United States in holding these events in
4 cities large and small, urban and rural. This was a very successful endeavor for the
5 National Community Reinvestment Coalition. We're looking to build on it as we go forward
6 next year and turn our national membership into a national movement. Thank you very
7 much for your support.

8
9 COUNCILMEMBER FLOREEN:
10 Mr. Williams.

11
12 HENRY WILLIAMS:
13 Yes. As stated, I'm Henry Williams, the president of the Rockville/Montgomery County
14 Chapter of the SCLC--the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. This organization
15 was started February 14, 1957, by the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King. So we are--
16 we sponsored a forum in April and for--we had real estate experts, predatory lending, and
17 housing, and we are going to continue to try to push this effort. And, Councilmember
18 Floreen, we thank you very much.

19
20 COUNCILMEMBER FLOREEN:
21 My pleasure. JOSH SILVER:
22 Good morning. First of all, I want to thank the Montgomery County Council and
23 Councilmember--Councilwoman Floreen so much for this--this great honor. And I just
24 want to mention a few words about the Community Reinvestment Modernization Act of
25 2009. We are in the midst of a national foreclosure crisis, and the National Community
26 Reinvestment Coalition and our 600 community organizations are dedicated to making
27 sure that this does not happen again and dedicated to make sure that working Americans
28 who are working hard for the American dream have access to responsible loans for home
29 ownership, for small business development, and for economic development and
30 healthcare facilities and other community facilities. And the Community Reinvestment Act
31 requires banks to make loans consistent with safety and soundness, and it was bank
32 lending under CRA that was responsible in affording opportunities to build wealth. But
33 there was a part of the financial industry that was not covered by this wonderful law.
34 Mortgage companies and Wall Street were making the risky loans that we know are now
35 going into foreclosure. So we think that the Community Reinvestment Modernization Act
36 of 2009 is a critical law, and one thing it would do is it would expand CRA obligations to
37 financial institutions that are not covered by the law. It would strengthen CRAs applied to
38 banks, and also it would require--it would give us more data--there's some publicly
39 available data, but it would give us more data to really know what are the loan terms and
40 conditions, and with that data, we could detect problems early and--and have a public
41 discussion and debate and curb some of the risky products and practices before they

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1 cause foreclosure crises in the future. So, I am so pleased that Councilmember Floreen
2 has spoken in favor of this bill, and other Councilmembers--and other Councilmembers on
3 the Council have also spoken in favor of the bill. Local members of the Congressional
4 delegation--Donna Edwards, Jim Moran--have co-sponsored the bill. It's HR 1479.
5 Representative Chris Van Hollen's office is receptive but have not--has not yet co-
6 sponsored. So we hope that additional members of the County Council and you in the
7 audience will contact Representative Chris Van Hollen in the next few days and kindly ask
8 him to co-sponsor HR 1479. And literally, CRA has been responsible for trillions of dollars
9 of loans over the last 30 years, and we think it is time to apply the requirement of safety
10 and soundness to the rest of the financial industry and have trillions of dollars of more
11 safe and sound loans and investments for our communities. Thank you so much.

12
13 COUNCILMEMBER FLOREEN:

14 Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Williams. Why don't you hold on just a second, and
15 we'll have... Let me give this to you.

16
17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

18 Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you, Councilmember Floreen. And we're now
19 going to move on to general business--announcement and agenda and calendar changes
20 first. Miss Lauer.

21
22 LINDA LAUER:

23 Just one addition today. On the Consent Calendar, we're adding the introduction of a
24 supplemental appropriation for the Department of Housing and Community Affairs. It's a
25 \$5.5 million state grant for the Weatherization Assistance Program. We've got a public
26 hearing scheduled for June 30 at 1:30. Thank you.

27
28 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

29 Thank you.

30
31 LINDA LAUER:

32 And there are no petitions this week.

33
34 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

35 OK. There were a lot last time, so we had two--two sessions' worth last time, I think. But
36 we encourage anybody who wishes to contact us to please do so, and we will--we will
37 listen to what people have to say. Our next will be approval of the minutes of May 7, 11,
38 12, 13, 14, 18, and 21 of 2009 and approval of closed session minutes of May 18, 2009. Is
39 there a motion for approval?

40
41 COUNCILMEMBER LEVENTHAL:

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1 Motion for approval.

2
3 COUNCILMEMBER ERVIN:
4 Second.

5
6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:
7 Approved by--motion by Councilmember Leventhal, seconded by Councilmember Ervin.
8 All in favor of approving the minutes of those dates, please raise your hand. That is
9 unanimous. They are approved, 9-0. Next is our Consent Calendar. Is there a motion for
10 approval?

11
12 COUNCILMEMBER KNAPP:
13 So moved.

14
15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:
16 Moved by Councilmember Knapp. Is there a second?

17
18 COUNCILMEMBER NAVARRO:
19 Second.

20
21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:
22 Seconded by Councilmember Navarro. All right. Are there comments on the Consent
23 Calendar? Councilmember--Council Vice President Berliner.

24
25 COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT BERLINER:
26 Yes. Council President, I would like to move that we take off the Consent Calendar item F,
27 which is our turf field issue, and I do so because I believe that having it on the Consent
28 Calendar diminishes the incredible amount of work that has gone on on this effort and
29 conveys that somehow this Council had not seriously looked into all of the issues
30 surrounding this matter--including, as I understand it, even yet this morning again. So, I
31 want for the public to understand how seriously we looked at this, and again, my belief is
32 having it on the Consent Calendar somehow trivializes all the work that has gone on on
33 this matter. And it is not to suggest that in any way I'm not supportive of the conclusion
34 that has been reached with respect to this, but I just think that this is too important to too
35 many people to handle in this manner procedurally.

36
37 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:
38 OK.

39
40 COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT BERLINER:
41 So I would like to invoke my right to take it off the Consent Calendar with respect to that.

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1
2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS. OK. We'll have a separate vote on that.

3
4 COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT BERLINER:

5 And without losing my right to the floor, if I could, Council President, I would also like to
6 speak to an item on our Consent Calendar, which is item C...

7
8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

9 All right.

10
11 COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT BERLINER:

12 Which is the release of the Office of Legislative Oversight's report on naturally occurring
13 retirement communities and neighborhood villages, an issue that is incredibly important in
14 my district and to our community as a whole just on the basis of how many seniors we
15 have in our community and how many more seniors we expect to have in the years ahead
16 and the percentage of seniors who want to stay in their homes and want to stay in their
17 communities. 88% to 93% of our seniors want to stay here, but staying here is a
18 challenge, and we need to be able to provide our seniors that want to stay in our
19 communities transportation help, we need to be able to provide them socialization, we
20 need to be able to provide them with lots of support that we're beginning to do, quite
21 frankly, and the county is on the leading edge with respect to this matter. And in my
22 communities--and again, in particular, you'll see that District One has three of the four top
23 senior communities in our county as a whole. And these communities want to have senior
24 villages. They want to be able to stay there. They want to be able to have support services
25 for them to be able to stay in their homes. And we're beginning to do that. We have got
26 the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Service Center, under Ken Hartman, who's doing a
27 great job in meeting with our communities, and OLO's report identifies precisely the kinds
28 of issues that we're going to need to look at. And I know that the Chairman of the HHS
29 Committee will be taking this matter up in Committee and I look forward to joining you for
30 that discussion, sir. Thank you.

31
32 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

33 Thank you, Council Vice President Berliner. I want to mention that we're making a number
34 of appointments to commissions this morning and we are appointing-- Yes. Yes. I'm not
35 finished yet. But we're going to be appointing Tamara Duell to the Commission on Aging;
36 Bernadine Occhiuzzo to the Commission on Child Care; Donna--Dorothy Fait and Donna
37 Rismiller are being reappointed to the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council; Jessica
38 Fusillo and Joshua Moses to the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board; Heinz Bachmann,
39 Joel Cockrell, Nicholas Alexander, Natalia Farrar, Cherian Eapen, Andrew Einsmann,
40 Rebecca Walker, and James King to the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board--some are
41 reappointments; Jill Coutts, Michael Smith, and Alan Kravitz to the Water Quality Advisory

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1 Group; and Linda Amendt, Dan Somma, Janet Yu, Duncan Smith, and Randy McDonald--
2 again, a couple of those are reappointments, as well--to the Wheaton Urban District
3 Advisory Committee. And we thank all of the people in our community who volunteer--
4 most--almost all these commissions are unpaid--to serve on these important boards and
5 commissions and to give us their--their expert advice and thoughts on different issues
6 facing the County. Councilmember Knapp is next.

7
8 **COUNCILMEMBER KNAPP:**

9 Thank you, Mr. President. Just a quick comment. I appreciate what the Council Vice
10 President is doing, and we all have the opportunity to pull things for further consideration
11 or further discussion off the Consent Calendar. I just want to clarify, though, that I think it's
12 important for people to understand because something is on a Consent Calendar, it is in
13 no way a trivial issue, and if people feel that way, that is unfortunate. But I think it's
14 important for people to understand we have a number of things that take place on our
15 Consent Calendar each and every week. In fact, we are doing--item H is a nearly \$3
16 million categorical transfer for our school system. We have actually done entire--reviewed
17 entire budgets that committees have done and put those on our Consent Calendar. It is a
18 function of trying to get things done in an expedited fashion because we have a County of
19 a million people and \$4.2 billion budget, so we've got a lot of stuff. And I know--and I know
20 the Council Vice President is not saying that by being on a Consent Calendar it is
21 trivializing anything. I think people misunderstand that, and I think it's important to clarify
22 that point. If we had to take separate actions on every item that this Council has to do,
23 we'd be here for a really, really, really long time. And so I just think that people out there, I
24 understand, who may not be as familiar with the Council's activities as others, because it's
25 on a Consent Calendar doesn't mean we think more or less of it. It just means that we
26 think that there tends--by the time it gets to Consent Calendar, we've worked through
27 many of the issues, and so there's no need for long public discourse, because we've
28 already had it in many of our committees. So I just wanted to take this opportunity to
29 clarify that point because I think it's important for people to understand that. But I
30 appreciate the Council Vice President's interest in this issue.

31
32 **COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:**

33 And thank you, Councilmember Knapp. I know as that as a former Council President, you
34 had to schedule a lot of these yourself and appreciate the need to consolidate sometimes.
35 But certainly many of the issues that we deal with, either on the Consent Calendar or not
36 on the Consent Calendar, are of interest, and--but we will take up item F separately after
37 we deal with the rest of the Consent Calendar. OK. Councilmember Trachtenberg.

38
39 **COUNCILMEMBER TRACHTENBERG:**

40 Thank you, President Andrews. I'm just going to make some brief remarks about item
41 number C, as well--the receipt and release of the Legislative Oversight Office report on

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1 NORCs. I feel obligated to raise one issue in particular. You know, I know several of my
2 colleagues are aware that there were some focus groups actually developed through my
3 office--and they've been out in the community--that have been focused primarily on the
4 delivery of healthcare to seniors. And back a few months ago, as we were preparing to
5 release this report, I had raised some issues around behavioral health, specifically the
6 need to develop screening and intervention services for seniors in that particular area of
7 delivery. And I would note that we are scheduled to have a HHS worksession for this item
8 on the 16th of July. I would let my colleagues know I will not be here for that meeting
9 because of a prior commitment. I regret that. It's my intention to formulate a memo, which
10 will be quite substantial, and circulate it to colleagues prior to the worksession. I know
11 there'll be other opportunities to have conversation about the report, but clearly I
12 understand that the topic has great merit. But I just wanted to advise my colleagues that I
13 would not be here, a memo will be on its way, and I would respectfully request that we
14 actually schedule an additional worksession on the report, because, as I said, there are a
15 lot of things that I think need to be discussed around that one particular area of concern. I
16 clearly want to congratulate the Office of Legislative Oversight for the preparation of the
17 report and all those that played a participatory role, but I want to make sure as we
18 proceed forward with the different steps, and specifically those things we invest dollars in,
19 that we make sure that we actually isolate some time for a conversation on behavioral
20 health and seniors.

21
22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

23 Thank you, Councilmember Trachtenberg. All right. We are now ready for a vote on the
24 Consent Calendar, excluding item F. All those in favor, please raise your hand. And that is
25 unanimous, so that is approved. We'll now go to item F, and I'll turn to the Chair of the
26 Education Committee, who has led the discussions on this. We've had, over the last two
27 years, six or seven worksessions. Seven? Is it seven? OK.

28
29 COUNCILMEMBER ERVIN:

30 We've had seven worksessions including the one this morning.

31
32 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

33 Very good.

34
35 COUNCILMEMBER ERVIN:

36 I think that we have thoroughly reviewed this issue. I'm being joined at the dais by
37 Legislative Analyst Essie McGuire. And the packet--if you turn to agenda item 2F in the
38 packet, the Education Committee is--has recommended approval of this appropriation,
39 "with the understanding that the Council will conduct further review of environmental and
40 health safety monitoring options that may be appropriate for artificial turf athletic fields in
41 the County." And I'm reading that to you because the question has arisen about how this

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1 will be memorialized, and it's being memorialized because as chair of the Education
2 Committee, I'm speaking on behalf of the Committee, and it is in the document, and I don't
3 know what else you might need from me to--to move forward, but I think that this
4 Committee has done its due diligence on this issue, and we're ready to proceed.

5
6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

7 OK. Thank you, Chair Ervin. Council Vice President Berliner.

8
9 COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT BERLINER:

10 And let me make clear again, to the extent to which I did not, I do not question the due
11 diligence, and I do not question the due diligence of the parents of the Walter Johnson
12 community who are eager to have this field and eager to have their kids play on this field.
13 And I, for the life of me, cannot figure out how parents that--would willingly subject their
14 children to a serious environmental hazard. So, they--I know that they have explored this
15 issue carefully, I know the school system has explored this issue carefully, and there
16 remains these issues out there. And so the need for ongoing monitoring is something that
17 I do think is owed. I do believe that there was an understanding with respect to it, and I
18 look forward to seeing the memorialization of that understanding in the form that is
19 appropriate so that we can show the community that we are going the extra mile here to
20 ensure that we are looking out for the safety of our children, as I know the Committee is
21 committed to, as I know the school system is committed to, and as I know the parents of
22 these children are committed to.

23
24 COUNCILMEMBER ERVIN:

25 Thank you very much. Essie, did you want to make any comments, or are you fine? OK.

26
27 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

28 OK? And then Councilmember Elrich.

29
30 COUNCILMEMBER ELRICH:

31 I think that everybody has done a lot of work on this issue, and I've spent some part of the
32 last week doing my own Google searching on, you know, what's out there on the Internet
33 and what you find. And I'm going to vote for this because the overwhelming evidence--or
34 actually, the overwhelming lack of evidence is that there's not a problem. But I will say that
35 the--you know, the people who raised issues about this do have issues that are under
36 further study and I will point out the two things that struck me. One was that the--under the
37 state of Connecticut, the Connecticut Agricultural Extension Station did a study of rubber
38 pellets that are used in this material, and they concluded that there was leachate from the
39 pellets into the water, and this was of some concern to them. Now, other studies by other
40 groups have not found that. It is also true this particular company now has a lead-free
41 product, but it's also true that this company claimed for years to have a lead-free product,



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1 and they didn't have a lead-free product. They were sued by two jurisdictions in 2008.
2 They admitted they used lead chromate. Lead chromate was used--is used to enhance
3 the green color in the turf. When you see artificial turf that turns yellow, it's because the
4 lead chromate has leached out of the blades. But after the lawsuit, they removed the lead
5 chromate from their product, and I believe their product is, in fact, now lead-free, that they
6 have taken the steps to correct the problem. But the fact that they did say for years they
7 were lead-free when they weren't I think says something about the need to do due
8 diligence. Just because a company says "we're not doing something wrong" doesn't mean
9 they're not doing something wrong. And there's not like a short corporate history of that.
10 There's a rather long corporate history of that. So I think people are right to be skeptical
11 when they hear things. They're right to do the research, and I think in this case, the
12 research says they removed the lead. That's not an issue. And the other studies are
13 really, really inconclusive, and certainly they weigh far more on the side that there's not a
14 problem than on the side that there is a problem. And so I think that this is the right
15 decision, as long as all of us are agreeing that we're doing monitoring, and hopefully, you
16 know, the EPA will not come back with the results of their study and say this isn't a
17 particularly bright idea. Hopefully, they'll confirm all the other studies and this will turn out
18 to be, in the long run, a really good decision. But I think the Committee certainly has
19 looked at everything you could possibly look at to make this decision, and if you were just
20 weighing the evidence, it's not a close call. It weighs pretty heavily in favor of doing this.

21
22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

23 OK. Thank you. Councilmember Leventhal.

24
25 COUNCILMEMBER LEVENTHAL:

26 Thank you, Mr. President. I listened attentively to the public hearing on this issue,
27 and...and I am appreciative of citizens who ask questions about decisions that we make.
28 I'm appreciative of citizens who want us to exert what oversight ability we have over the
29 school system and its decisions. I think that's all to the good. What had not been raised by
30 those who expressed concern about the artificial turf were the concerns that were raised
31 about a natural turf field, and I think those are valid and serious. I think if you're going to
32 cut the grass, you're going to spew a lot of particulate emissions into the air with your
33 lawnmower. If you're going to fertilize the field to keep it green and lush, there's a risk of
34 fertilizer runoff into the water supply. Those--those are serious and considerable issues
35 that, it seemed to me, offset substantially the benefits that were claimed of--you know, you
36 would think that having a natural grassy field would be a great asset to the environment,
37 but the way you have to maintain a natural grassy field in order to have it available for
38 play, it isn't natural, and a lot of months of the year, it isn't grassy. So, you know, I think it's
39 just important to state that for the record. I'm going--I, as all my colleagues are, are
40 environmentally sensitive on the issues that were raised about the artificial turf. I took
41 them seriously when I first heard about them a few years ago. But I don't think adequate

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1 attention was paid by the skeptics and the critics to the real environmental consequences
2 of having a natural turf field. Much as we want to support our turf industry and the AG
3 Reserve and, you know, there's--this is a-- not an easy call. There were strong arguments
4 on both sides of this, but I'm prepared to go along with the work done by the Education
5 Committee on this issue, and I will vote for the appropriation.

6
7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

8 OK. Thank you, Councilmember Leventhal. Councilmember Trachtenberg.

9
10 COUNCILMEMBER TRACHTENBERG:

11 Thank you, President Andrews. Well, I definitely feel I have to make some comments on
12 this item. I happen to be the proud parent of a Walter Johnson graduate from the year
13 2000, and I certainly, like all my colleagues, appreciate the opportunities that are
14 available--not just at WJ, but throughout the county for our students. I also want to note
15 that I appreciate the very thoughtful conversation that I think has taken place over the last
16 few weeks both within the Ed Committee, but really, here within the full Council. As I said
17 to a parent the other day, who actually just happens to live down the street from me--I
18 happen to live right up from the high school--you know, the literature clearly is scattered
19 somewhat on the topic, but the fact that there is a willingness and a commitment to some
20 ongoing oversight as the field is developed and utilized by students, that's enough of a
21 comfort zone for me and I suspect, again, for my colleagues. So, again, I support the
22 funding for this, and I support the opportunity for the students, and I'm sure as we proceed
23 in making this similar investment in other school settings, that at some point we'll have a
24 better sense of what are the health ramifications but, more importantly, what are the
25 things that we do to support the health and well-being of those students that are utilizing
26 the opportunity and the field itself. So, I want to thank my colleagues, and I want to thank
27 the community for the valuable input that was provided to all of us over the course of the
28 last few weeks on this particular investment.

29
30 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

31 Thank you, Councilmember Trachtenberg. Councilmember Navarro.

32
33 COUNCILMEMBER NAVARRO:

34 Thank you, President Andrews. I also want to take this time to--to thank the Education
35 Committee, Chairman Ervin, as well as the work that I know that--Essie, you have done,
36 as well as the school system. And I know Mr. Joe Lavorgna is here. I'm kind of switching
37 back and forth. When I was sitting at the Board of Education, this was an issue that was
38 raised, and board members also had a lot of questions about the health concerns and
39 how could we make a decision that was viable. So, I feel pretty confident that the decision
40 to put in some mechanism to--to further study and to monitor some of these concerns--it's
41 really important, and I think it will serve really well all parents, including myself, a parent of



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1 two MCPS students. But most importantly, I think it's also the issue of the availability of
2 these fields to their community because this was definitely a concern time and time again,
3 not just for the schools particularly wanting to provide a field for their students, but then
4 the fact the community really wanted to utilize these fields after school hours, and there
5 was all that difficulty of scheduling, et cetera. So it's--it's a wonderful opportunity, and I
6 know that when people are making decisions about issues that affect children, they
7 always have their best intention moving forward, so I would definitely support this--I guess
8 again, in a different capacity. Thank you.

9
10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREWS:

11 OK. Thank you, Councilmember Navarro. And I, too, want to thank Councilmember Ervin,
12 who chairs our Education Committee, who has basically ensured that over the last two
13 years that this issue has gotten the attention it deserves, and I appreciate that and thank
14 all the members of the community who've weighed in. We will continue to listen. But I do
15 think this is the right decision. I think that artificial turf has numerous advantages over
16 grass turf and the most dominant one being that it will allow much greater use of the field,
17 which are in short--and our fields are in short supply in Montgomery County. There's
18 intense demand for their use. It also allows school students to stay onsite rather than
19 travel offsite to practice, which creates other problems and safety issues for the students.
20 So, I thank you all for the good work. Thank you, Chair Ervin, and I think we're now ready
21 to vote on this special appropriation. So all those in favor, please raise your hand. And
22 that is unanimous. Thank you. That is adopted, 9-0. That concludes that part. We're now
23 on to the legislative session and introduction of bills. Bill 27-09, Ethics - Amendments,
24 sponsored by the Council President at the request of the Ethics Commission. A public
25 hearing is scheduled for July 14 at 1:30 PM. Without opposition, objection, the bill is
26 introduced. Next is District Council session, item 4 introduction--resolution to approve the
27 use of the Advance Land Acquisition Fund--ALARF--for acquisition of real property from
28 Fairland Development LLC as parkland for Fairland Recreational Park. A PHED
29 Committee worksession is tentatively scheduled for July 2, 2009. And our final item on the
30 District Council session, final item for the morning, is introduction of Zoning Text
31 Amendment 09-04, Rural Neighborhood Cluster Zones - Equestrian facilities, sponsored
32 by Councilmember Knapp, and the action is to just pass a resolution to establish a public
33 hearing for July 21, 2009, at 1:30 PM. And so is there is a motion to pass that resolution?
34 Moved by Councilmember Knapp. Seconded by Councilmember Ervin. All those in favor
35 of a resolution to establish a public hearing for Zoning Text Amendment 09-04 on July 21
36 at 1:30, please raise your hand. And that is unanimous of the Council. That's 9-0. And that
37 concludes our session for today. We are now going to recess, and thank you all for
38 coming.